

Contributions

THE HOPES OF THE CALIFORNIA CHURCH

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The California church here means the Brethren—the Brethren church—in the state of California. It implies that we have hopes, and in this paper something is to be said about those hopes.

Hopes is the plural of hope, and it signifies that we have more than one hope. Every member—faithful member—enjoys the hope of salvation, eternal salvation, thru our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Hope is composed of desire and expectation. We may desire a thing but if we do not expect it, there is no hope; and so we may expect a thing but if there is no desire there is no hope. We must have both the desires and expectations to enjoy hopes.

We, the brethren and sisters, assembled in this conference, represent the church in California, and we should be able to determine what are the hopes of the church in California. I feel that I am safe in saying that it is our desire that the gospel of Christ should be preached throughout the state, in all its fulness and purity; it is our desire that all who profess to be Christians should be one body, having the same faith and practice, and these in strict accordance with the gospel of Christ. But while these are our desires—our ardent desires—when we take all connected circumstances into consideration, we can not expect the realization or accomplishment of these good desires, and, consequently, we cannot say that these are “the hopes of the California church.” Our hopes extend as far as do our expectations of the accomplishment of our desires. We know what the will of God is concerning the salvation of every soul, for Christ said, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” It is our desire that the will of God, the command of Christ, should be done; and in harmony with our desires, we are—or should be—willing to do all we can to have the gospel preached to every soul in California, as a part of the whole world. But Christ said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” implying that not all would believe, and hence that not all should be baptized.

But what are our hopes? We hope that we, as children of God, as brethren and sisters in Christ, may grow in grace and progress in the divine life. We hope that, as time passes and we advance, we may say and do more and more for the preaching of the gospel of Christ and the salvation of souls.

We hope that in accordance with increased and extended efforts, under God's blessing, many of our fellow beings and fellow citizens may be convert-

ed, regenerated, and be faithful, zealous members of this one body—the body of Christ. We hope that the time may come—and we wish that it may come soon—when many more may be in our conferences, and when we may have several districts for conferences in California.

We hope that our efforts in the present conference may be a good step in the accomplishment of these our brightest hopes for this world. We hope ultimately to meet with each other and with all God's children from all ages and all nations in that wonderful assembly in the kingdom of immortal glory, where we shall realize all that is in reservation for God's children.

As these are our hopes, let us beseech God our Father in the name of his Son, our Redeemer and Saviour, and by the guiding and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, to help us do all we can for the accomplishment and realization of these hopes of the California church.

WHAT IS SIN? WHAT ARE ITS WAGES?

MARY DIETZ

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. I John 3:4.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life thru Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6:23.

Sin is the weapon which satan carries with which he leads man into sorrow, destruction and death. It is the sword which satan uses that is transformed into every imaginable device for deception. To those who are not spiritually enlightened this weapon does not always appear as a sword but as something most desirable. It is transformed in many ways, into that which charms the eye, the intellect and the very soul of man.

The blessed Word teaches man to “abhor evil.” Abhor sin. Does he pray in faith that God may help him abhor evil? If he does not he robs himself of a great privilege and blessing. Sin is destructive. God surely knows what is best for his children when he warns them against that which is destructive in its very nature. Ever since our first parents yielded to the voice of satan this destructive influence has been doing its work. It has filled the world with unbelief. Sin has blighted God's once fair and beautiful handiwork, and filled the earth with curses, seen and unseen, too numerous to mention. The penitentiary, the madhouse, the saloon, the ball room and the theater all show the effect sin is having upon mankind. Last but not least to mention as being destructive in its influence, is the brothel, with all that leads to it. Uncleanliness, doubtless does more toward keeping mankind separated from God than any other one sin. It brings about those sins which cause

man to deceive most. They go about with apparently innocent, or haughty, looks and bearing, which say, “I have not sinned.” Those sins, also, according to I Cor. 7:18, 19, 20, separate man from the spirit of God. They cause him to sin against his body which is not his own, but is bought with a price. They cause him to disobey the command to “go and sin no more.” He forgets that part of God's word and only remembers “neither do I condemn thee.” This freedom from condemnation was in all probability given to one who was very weak and one that had never heard of a Redeemer. One who had never heard of the Light in darkness. The Light of the world, the Life from death, the Freedom from bondage. She had never heard of one who said, “whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,” “ye cannot serve two masters,” and “if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

Even believers of today seem to forget the above blessed promises. If they are weak themselves they permit their weakness to cause the blood of the Son of God to be trampled under foot, and to be brought to open shame. They dishonor God in that they do not trust his strength, forgetting their own weakness. God has warned man against these sins as well as all others, and he has furnished the redemption. God's children of which the body is composed, that Christ shall claim his bride, will take a stronger stand on the purity question than the Christian is taking today. Dear reader, do we wish to be a part of this body? Remember, God created man upright. He created man in His likeness. Although sin and satan may claim a part of his being God still claims his own. Within the inmost soul of man exists the life germ of God. It is a birth right of every human being.

Sin is destructive to man and is against him. It has raised a barrier between man and God. The Holy Spirit breaks down the barrier and the blood of God's Son washes it away. God sends his spirit to convict man of his sin, and the blood of Jesus Christ, thru faith cleanses from unrighteousness. The spirit of God will guide man into truth and righteousness, and the blood of Christ thru faith will keep him righteous. In this day man may resist the pleadings of the Holy Spirit, which would win him to reconciliation and love. He may reject the blood, but in the Lord's great day he cannot get away from God's presence and his spirit. Then the Spirit will surely convict, even against man's will, and reveal to him the awfulness of sin. But it will be too late. The blood of Christ cannot then atone for sin and man will be eternally lost.

Dear reader, let us rather “abhor evil” while time and opportunity is presented